



HTBF Annual Meet Celebrates Progress and Plans for the Future

Help the Blind Foundation (HTBF) held its annual meeting from February 11th to 13th, 2024, in Bangalore. Students, trainers, trustees and volunteers from across the country came together for this significant event. The proceedings commenced on the first day with a warm welcome by the emcees, Ms. Pooja and Ms. Ambika. A presentation on the history of HTBF followed, shedding light on how Mr DK Patel and his wife, Ms Niti Patel, laid the foundation by contributing to the construction of the Bhagatji Block at St. Louis School for the Blind in 2008. This retrospective instilled a sense of pride and emotion in the organization's values and culture.

Over the next two days, various teams, including Scholarship Team, EMET (Education, Mobility, Employability Training) program trainers, and various other teams from cities like Chennai, Indore, Nagpur, Delhi, Coimbatore, Ahmedabad, and Bangalore, showcased their impact on the students. They highlighted their collaborations with universities and presented statistics on individual student performance. The third day featured two separate meetings: one for the volunteers and trustees, where innovative solutions for HTBF's future were discussed, and another for trainers and team members, where Mr Nataraj briefed them on student engagement strategies and the new curriculum requirements.

The closing ceremony on the final day was a joyous occasion attended by all. Students, trainers, trustees and volunteers showcased their talents through performances, dance, and song, marking the closing ceremony of this annual meeting.



Inauguration of MCC Resource Center for Inclusive Tech Education

On March 20, 2024, Help the Blind Foundation (HTBF) inaugurated the Resource Center at Madras Christian College (MCC) in a celebratory function held from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. The event witnessed the esteemed presence of Mr. M Pugalendhi (National Head, HR, Saint Gobain), Ms. Shailaja (Journalist), Mr. J Arockiaprakasam (Chief Vigilance and Security Officer, Saint Gobain), Mr Nithin Kumar and his team from Saint Gobain. From MCC, attendees included Dr. Janice (Professor, Social Works Department), Dr. Robinson (Professor, Mathematics Department), and Mr. Udayraj (Professor).

The guest speaker was Mr. Srinivas from Sutherland Global Services. A highlight was the distribution of smart vision glasses (Pro) to 14 beneficiary students. The donors expressed satisfaction with the Resource Center and interacted with students, conducting interviews to understand the Center's meaningful impact on facilitating education and empowerment for the visually impaired. It was decided that EMET sessions would commence at the Center from March 26th onwards, marking a significant milestone in HTBF's mission to promote inclusive education through technology.



Gazing at Success: Revitalizing Skills of Visually Impaired Bank Employees

Help the Blind Foundation conducted a 2-day refresher training workshop from 29th-30th January 2024 at the UCO Bank Training Centre in Chennai. The program was attended by 12 visually impaired (VI) employees of UCO Bank from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh regions. Facilitated by Ms. Gayatri, Mr. Sakthivel, and Ms. Pooja from the foundation, the key objectives were to brush up participants' MS Office skills, enhance employability through soft skills training, and raise awareness about assistive devices/applications for the visually impaired.

Customized modules were curated based on a pre-workshop survey of participants' skills and needs. The 8 sessions of 90 minutes each covered diverse topics like computer fundamentals, MS Word/Excel practicals, soft skills such as listening, team building, self-esteem and customer service, email/file management. Hands-on assignments reinforced learning while trainers clarified doubts. Uniquely, participants gained exposure to assistive tools like canes, keyboards, apps like Lazarillo, Visor etc. along with mobility cane techniques.

Post-workshop feedback revealed the training imparted practical skills effectively. Participants particularly appreciated the mobility training and assistive technology exposure. Moving forward, the foundation recommends periodic refreshers incorporating real-life scenarios to keep VI employees updated with evolving technologies for sustained professional growth. Overall, this multi-dimensional workshop exemplified the foundation's commitment to empowering the visually impaired community through strategic skill development initiatives.





Lucknow Inauguration Program

On 22nd March 2024 at 11 AM, Help the Blind Foundation (HTBF) organized an auspicious inauguration program for their EMET initiative at the College for Deaf in Lucknow. The event commenced with a melodious Saraswati Vandana by students, followed by a welcoming speech setting an inclusive tone. Esteemed dignitaries present included Mr. Ajinkya Zingade (AVP, Aseem Infrastructure Finance Limited), Mr Koushalendra (Head of Deaf Education Dept.), Mr. Sivaji Rao (Managing Trustee, HTBF), Mr. Devaraj (Junior Project Officer), and Ms. Kashish Gupta (Computer Trainer). The program was anchored by Mr Dhiraj from HTBF, with Dr Vijay Shankar Sharma (HOD) delivering the welcome speech. Mr. Dhiraj introduced the EMET program's objectives, followed by Mr. Sivaji Rao highlighting HTBF's empowerment initiatives through technology.



Professor Koushalendra emphasized technical training's importance for the visually impaired. The University administration's positive response affirmed support for an inclusive learning environment. A key highlight was the distribution of 26 laptops, 26 Smart Vision Glasses, and scholarship cheques to 23 deserving candidates, enabling access to education and technology. The inauguration symbolized collective efforts toward fostering inclusivity and empowerment through specialized education for the visually impaired.

Eye Camp for Low Vision - Presidency College



Eye camp organized by Vision Aid, Shankara Nethralaya, and supported by HTBF provided comprehensive vision assessments, personalized advice on assistive devices and eye health, and diagnosed 19 EMET students with low vision at Presidency College on February 19, 2024.



Company Visit in F2 Company in New Delhi

HTBF recently organized a company visit for around 22 students to F2 Fintech Pvt Ltd on March 5th, 2024. This was our first visit in the Delhi region and it proved to be an exceptional learning experience.

The visit was meticulously structured by the Founder and CEO of F2 Fintech Pvt Ltd, Mr. Harpreet Singh and his team. Students were divided into four groups and each group received detailed explanations about the seven key departments - HR, Operations, Sales, Marketing, Credit, IT, and Product. The respective team members actively engaged with students, explaining their roles, addressing queries patiently, and sharing insights on required skills.

A highlight was the interactive discussions that allowed students to share their experiences and gain a practical understanding of various roles. At the end, each student and trainer received a certificate of participation. The company also assured campus interviews before March-end and internship opportunities for our 2022-24 batch.

Notably, an awareness session was conducted on the accessibility needs of the visually impaired. While there is scope for improvement, F2's willingness to enhance accessibility is commendable.

We extend our gratitude to Mr. Harpreet Singh and his team for their exceptional hospitality. This enriching visit reflected their commitment to nurturing talent and empowering future professionals. We look forward to further collaborations.



Story of Inspiring Mr. Santosh Kumar(our beneficiary)

Mr. Santosh Kumar is a blind student from Chitrakoot district, Uttar Pradesh, has expressed his gratitude to the Help the Blind Foundation for providing him with a scholarship. He has completed his education with the help of this scholarship. Santosh is a beneficiary of SGTB Khalsa college. He has expressed his gratitude to the foundation for helping him achieve his goals. He believes that our organisation has not only helped him with his studies but also has inspired him to develop his self-skills. He feels that with the help of HTBF, anyone can achieve their goals, regardless of their circumstances.



Inauguration of Two Computer Resource Centers at Devnar Foundation, Hyderabad

On March 19th, 2024, Help The Blind Foundation and Saint-Gobain inaugurated two state-of-the-art Computer Resource Centers at the Devnar Foundation in Hyderabad. This significant initiative aims to empower visually impaired students by providing access to technology and resources essential for their academic pursuits.

In addition to establishing the Resource Centers, laptops were distributed to 20 visually impaired graduate students, marking the third such laptop distribution at Devnar. This generous contribution will enhance the students' ability to study independently and excel in their examinations.



The event witnessed the esteemed presence of Dr. Saibaba from Devnar, Mr. Sivaji Rao, a trustee of HTBF, Mr. Nitin from Saint-Gobain, and dedicated volunteers. Their unwavering support and commitment were instrumental in bringing this impactful initiative to fruition. The inauguration of these Computer Resource Centers symbolizes a collective effort to foster an inclusive learning environment and empower visually impaired individuals through access to modern technology and educational resources.



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Great News!

Ms. Chhonzin Angmo, HTBF beneficiary, received recognition at Chennai's Cavinkare Ability Foundation Awards for her achievements. Ms Angmo is also an officer in the Union Bank of India and a mountaineer who has taken part in the Siachen expedition organised by the Indian Army for eight PwDs as a show of tenacity and resilience



Academic Year 2023 Scholarship Program: A Remarkable Journey

As we close the chapter on the academic year 2023, we take a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey of our Scholarship Program. This year has been a testament to the power of collective effort and the pursuit of academic excellence.

Highlights & Statistics:

- Total Applications Received - 2,958
- Scholarships Awarded - 2,509
- Total Funds Disbursed - Rs 3 Crores +
- Diverse Disciplines Supported: 10+ ranging from BA to BA LLB
- Reach: Recipients from 15 different states, 260+ colleges

These numbers only begin to tell the story of dedication, ambition, and the bright futures that we are honoured to support. Our gratitude extends to the tireless volunteers who meticulously organised applications and coordinated communications. Your expertise has been invaluable to the reviewers who devoted hours to carefully evaluating each submission with fairness and insight. And to the approvers, whose final decisions were made with thoughtful consideration and a vision for the future, we owe a debt of gratitude.

Your collective contributions have not only made the Scholarship Program a success but have also positively impacted the lives of countless students. You have allowed the students to pursue their dreams and the tools to build a better world. As we look forward to the upcoming academic year, we are filled with hope and excitement for what our scholars will achieve. Let us continue to uplift and inspire one another through opportunities like these.

A Special Acknowledgment to Our Finance and Administrative Staff

Their meticulous attention to detail and dedication to ensuring every student receives the support they need is truly the unsung hero of our accomplishments. We are deeply grateful for their behind-the-scenes efforts, which have allowed us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our scholars.



Thank you for your support



Mr. Kishore
Mariwala

BECOME A PART OF THE MOVEMENT



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"Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking
alone in the light"- Helen Keller

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